



# Keys to the Valley Newsletter

The Keys to the Valley team wishes you a Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

This Winter we look forward to finalizing our analysis and preparing a toolbox of strategies to improve housing options. We continue to consult both residents and advisors in this process. Most recently, we held virtual focus groups with residents to discuss solutions for some of our biggest challenges in funding, construction, regulations and more. A few conversation highlights :

- ❖ Municipal financial incentives are best approached as investments, not a tax break. These incentives are best managed over time to ensure fiscal feasibility.
- ❖ There is demand in the region for small, affordable and energy efficient homes, but these homes are in short supply. These homes are attractive as both rentals and owner-occupied homes, but aesthetics and livability need to be considered in design.
- ❖ Personal stories provide important context for discussing solutions.
- ❖ Regulations are complicated and change is hard, but new strategies must be tried. For community buy-in, local discussion and flexibility on specifics are important tools.
- ❖ With attention being placed on villages and downtowns, solutions need to address those living in more rural areas. What can we do for older homes that are off the main path?
- ❖ Becoming and being a landlord is difficult. A local resource to help individuals navigate some or all of the required steps would help the landlord and advance affordability of rent and local ownership.

We look forward to sharing what we've learned by Winter's end. In the Spring, we are excited to focus our efforts on attending and advancing community conversations that further a diverse exchange of ideas and solutions for our homes and those who live here.

## What is your Housing Story?

When talking about the big picture of housing, we've found it important to ground the concepts in real experience. Help by sharing your story and be a part of our public gallery. It can be a sentence, picture, short video or another unique format. You can highlight changes over time, challenges, or a home itself.

To submit your story you can email Olivia Uyizeye at [ouyizeye@uvlsrpc.org](mailto:ouyizeye@uvlsrpc.org) or on our website at

<https://www.keystothevalley.com/our-stories/>



"I own a small apartment house in WRJ. It is three apartments and I live on the first floor. I think that one thing that often doesn't get considered in this conversation is the experience of the landlord in the Upper Valley housing market."

- Marcia Gauvin  
Focus Group Participant